



**Brian Gottlob**  
**South Dakota State University**

**“Agriculture as a Career”**

When you think of agriculture, do you think of your own life? If you are from a farm or ranch, you may have reflected upon the last time you were driving a tractor or feeding some livestock. But what about those of us who do not come from an agricultural background? Whether we live in a rural community or an urban city, each of us is closely related to agriculture. So, how many connections to agriculture can we personally think of? Maybe it was simple to consider food and clothes, but what about a few more? All too often, we forget about how frequently our lives interact both directly and indirectly with agriculture. For example, each day we use pens made with soybean-based ink, wear leather shoes, watch sports that are played on turf with leather gear, and drive cars that are highly dependent upon agriculture—leather seats, ethanol fuels, as well as soy plastics and foams. From this small glimpse we can see that the industry of agriculture is much more complicated than simply raising and selling crops and livestock.

As our earth becomes greener each year, agriculture too has played a huge part in boosting efficiency and production levels all while improving quality as well as safety. Even during difficult economic times, agriculture generates countless new jobs and revenue streams. Ethanol plants create a renewable fuel while producing superior-quality feed; methane digesters capture greenhouse gasses and provide an additional source of energy. Despite these great strides, I believe that we have only begun to enhance agriculture. Research employs myriads of people and creates countless jobs each year as we seek solutions to challenges like higher populations, malnutrition, water shortages as well as urban sprawl, which results in less land devoted to agriculture. By expanding our knowledge of nutrition and crossbreeding superior genetics of livestock we have safely produced more protein in shorter periods of time with less feed inputs. Research has also generated drought resistant crops allowing farmers to harvest yields in areas formerly unsuitable for plant growth. From an economic evaluation, these advancements exponentially create new jobs in processing, advertising, transporting, and finally merchandizing sectors. In addition to job creation, an increase in food supply alleviates the ever-growing demand, which lowers the cost of living expenses related to food costs. This reduction boosts disposable income thus promoting job development in areas of entertainment and recreation.

Growing up on a diversified family farm, I had the opportunity to be involved firsthand starting at age four. One of my father's cows had twins, and he made the agreement with me that if I took care of the unclaimed calf I could have it. From that first encounter, agriculture has always been, and always will be a huge aspect of my life. Currently a junior at South Dakota State University, I am studying Agriculture Education/Communication with minors in Ag Business and Ag Marketing. Without my direct connection to agriculture, I may not have found my passion for agriculture nor the career in education to promote it. As a future Ag/FFA instructor, I will engage my students so that they too may experience agriculture. I also strive to parallel promotion with research through consumer education efforts. By reaching out to consumers, agriculture can rectify false assumptions, create new business potential, and promote additional growth.

Despite the numerous advancements agriculture has made within the last century, this industry has so much growth and potential. Through education I will inspire my students to tackle each challenge facing agriculture. I will prepare students for jobs in research, production, finance,

government regulation, international trade, agriculture tourism, satellite communications, and numerous other agriculture related careers. Teaching students gives me a glimpse of the future because these students will be the leaders who enhance the industry for all generations to come.